

FIRST UNITARIAN FOCUS



Newsletter of the
**First
Unitarian Church**
Alton, Illinois



Windows on the west side of sanctuary

www.firstuualton.org

Rev. Khleber Van Zandt, Minister

March 2013

Worship Services at 9:30 am and 11:00 am

March 3, 2013
“Revisiting Our Stories”
Irene Gulovsen

The wonderful Hasidic tale recounted by Elie Wiesel in his prologue to Gates of the Forest will serve as the starting point to a reflection on the formative role of “story” in our lives – as individuals and member of the various “groups” to which we belong through birth or by choice.

Irene Gulovsen has attended several services at our church in the last few months. She has preached and led worship services for several United Church of Christ congregations, including one in Abu Dhabi. She most recently served as interim pastor at St. John’s UCC in Brighton. She has a Master of Theological Studies from Eden Seminary.

March 10, 2013
“Peace, Love, and Understanding”
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

Nick Lowe’s song “What’s So Funny ‘Bout Peace, Love, and Understanding” is a wry take on generational divides. We’re going to need to bridge those divides to build the sort of world – and congregation – we seek.

Wednesday, March 13, 2013
12 noon
“Blessed are the Peacemakers”
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

Our church is again participating in Alton’s Community Lenten Services coordinated by Church Women United. Khleber will be speaking at the First United Methodist Church in Godfrey – 1100 Airport Road. A light lunch will follow the service.

March 17, 2013
“Why I Am a Unitarian – Version II”
Dee Evans

Khleber said that telling our stories helps us to get to know each other. I will tell my story of why I am a Unitarian to inspire others to share their stories.

March 24, 2013
-- Stewardship Sunday --
“Up and Over!”
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

As we kick off our annual pledge drive this year, we face many high hurdles on a very steep climb. It is truly up to us to face the hurdles and decide whether this “house that love built” will continue to fulfill its mission to inspire lives of love and service and justice for all

March 28, 2013
-- Thursday evening, 7:30 p.m. --
-- Tenebrae --
"The Darkest Hour"
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

Tenebrae is a service remembering the darkest moments of life. In the darkness, we'll offer up the names of those who have died recently, read from the Passion narratives, and silently partake of Communion together at a table open to all. *Please gather in the Kate Wuerker Room before the 7:30 hour and we'll enter the worship space together at the appropriate time.*

March 31, 2013 -- Easter --
-- an intergenerational worship service --
"Back to Life"
Rev. Khleber Van Zandt

On this resurrection day, the earth is coming back to life and renewing itself yet again. What a great lesson for hearts that have been away too long.

Liturgist:



**Alton Community Lenten
Service and Lunch
at First Unitarian**

On **Wednesday, March 20** at noon there will be a worship service followed by a lunch at our church. The sermon will be given by a pastor from another congregation in the Alton/Godfrey area. We will be hosting a light lunch for 50 to 60 people and will need volunteers to help plan and put the lunch together. Please consider helping if you are available that day.

Contact Rev. Khleber Van Zandt
Email: kvanzandt@uuma.org
Cell Phone:
Missouri – 314-223-0551
Illinois – 618-520-0567

Adult Religious Education (ARE)

Sessions at 9:30 am and 11 am
Childcare Available

At 9:30 am

**March 3 – Tracey Howe-Koch
The Bible.**

Questions, please contact Tracey Howe-Koch.

**March 10 – Dr. Ron Glossop
American Philosophy.**

Our 7th session on "American Philosophy" will focus on innovative philosopher of natural religion Henry Nelson Wieman (1884-1975). Wieman maintained that assertions about religious questions should be as objectively grounded as scientific assertions in general. He became a Unitarian minister in 1950, and while Professor of Philosophy at SIU-Carbondale in 1956-1966 was active in the Unitarian Fellowship there.

**March 17 – Eric Johnson
Theology Funshop.**

**March 24 – Michelle Bryant Barbeau
Earth-based Spirituality.**

Sacred Gardens - we will be exploring the cycles and spiritual lessons of preparation, germinating, planting, growth and trimming things away. What happens in ourselves after the darkness of Winter fades and the earth begins to move into different rhythms? How does that show up in the physical garden and vice a versa? Let's explore it together.

March 31 – To be announced

At 11:00 am

**March – Each Sunday
Cheryle Tucker – Spirit in Practice.**

Spirit in Practice was created to help Unitarian Universalists develop regular disciplines, or practices, of the spirit—practices that help them connect with the sacred ground of their being, however they understand it.

A First Glance

A funny thing happened on the way into church a few weeks ago. It was on one of those snowy, windswept Sunday mornings we seem to have had so many of lately. On this particular day, Linda and I got to church early so we could shovel the sidewalks yet again. Having been out ourselves, we both figured that not many people would want to venture forth on such a morning.

Our musician, Joy, was there early, but not many others, and when I rolled into the sanctuary just before 9:30, there were indeed only five or six stalwart souls waiting for the service to begin. As the five or six spread out through the sanctuary as people usually do, on a whim I said, "Hey, let's try something different. How about if we all get chairs and come sit in a circle in front of the pulpit and see what happens?" Shock of shocks, they all obliged, and we formed a small circle up front together.

Then it dawned: I had no plan for this new thing and no idea what to do next. But I knew we had each gotten out of our warm beds for *something* that cold morning. And so we began.

Sometimes that's the way change happens: in the expediency of a moment, you toss aside an old tradition and in steps something brand new. Instead of the usual formality of the worship service we've come to expect, what happened was a little looser, a little quieter, and then all of a sudden, a lot more interactive and participative. Instead of standing in the pulpit and preaching a sermon, I introduced the topic I thought I was going to talk about in the sermon that day, and then I asked them to speak any responses they had into the quiet of the space.

We were careful not to turn this into a 'discussion,' in the usual manner of one person responding to another and then another responding to them in a vaguely argumentative fashion. No, this was simply a series of responses on a common theme, a sharing of life experience and personal story that developed in the quiet and contemplative atmosphere brought into being by the small group seated in a circle in our beautiful sanctuary.

On subsequent Sundays, we tried a similar format. It was a little different each week, but so different from the usual worship service we've held that I think people will continue to return for this new form we've found without planning to.

For now, my plan – such as it is – is to focus both the 9:30 and the 11:00 service on the same topic. And though they're on the same topic, I have seen people come to both services the same day because they are so delightfully different.

So, if you're looking for something a little different, a little quieter, a little more contemplative, and far more interactive - something unplanned, unplugged, and unrehearsed - try joining us at 9:30 on Sundays. See you in church, with or without a plan.

Khleber



Coffeehouse Night

Now that we have a kitchen again, it's time for a Coffeehouse Night! On Friday, March 8 from 6:30-8:30 pm we're having a fun get together in the Kate Wuerker room with a variety of homegrown entertainment. Know friends or family that love music and poetry? Invite them to this free, community-building, and "kitchen-celebrating" event. Coffee, herbal teas, and spiced cider will be provided. Folks are encouraged to bring baked goods and other snacks. FYI, it's an alcohol-free event. For more information contact Spiral Blanton: spiralblanton@gmail.com or check out the UU Friends Facebook page

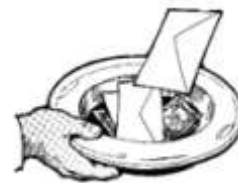
4th Saturday Lunch March 23 – 11:30 am

Trish Botsko is the 4th Saturday Lunch Coordinator and Sabrina Trupia coordinates the Personal Care Item distribution.



This month's lunch will be hosted by the RE parents and kids!

Details about the lunch will be available at church, on UU Friends, and through "This Week at Church" so watch for more information.



Community Outreach Offering (COO)

In March, the recipient of our 2nd and 4th Sunday Community Outreach Offering will be the Saint Louis Effort for AIDS <http://www.stlefa.org>. The EFA is the city's oldest AIDS Service Organization. Founded as a nonprofit organization in December 1985, programs, services and other ASO's evolved to address the enormous changes in medical treatment and testing for HIV/AIDS. Each month, EFA provides comprehensive support services to 1,280 clients and reaches approximately 1,250 people for testing and prevention education through our community outreach activities. If you have questions about our COO please contact Cheryle Tucker cheryle726@gmail.com

Chalice Circles



RENEGADE WOMEN'S CHALICE CIRCLE

Every 3rd Saturday.
Saturday, March 16 at from noon to 2 pm at church.

Contact the facilitator Dee Evans zorn227@fastmail.fm for further information.

PARENTS SEEKING PEACE CHALICE CIRCLE

Every 3rd Sunday.
Sunday, March 17 from 12:15 to 1:30 pm in Emerson Place at Church. Contact: Diane Thompson dianeelizabeththompson@gmail.com or Sayer Johnson sayerjohnson@gmail.com.

THE GLBT CHALICE CIRCLE

Every 3rd Sunday
Sunday, March 17 at 12:15 pm in the 7th grade classroom downstairs at Church.
Contact Staci Bratten sabrat10@gmail.com.

Your Church Board Jan – June 2013

President	Sayer Johnson
President Elect	Jennifer Timpe
Past President	Cheryl Tucker
Secretary	Sarah Lazarz
Treasurer	Michelle Bryant-Barbeau
Trustee	Kelly Crone-Willis
Trustee	Sandy Shaner
Youth Rep.	Lily Tade

Board meetings are the 2nd Monday each month at 7 pm and are open to the church members.

Interest Groups

Fifty-Plus (50+) Forum -
First Saturday of every month
March 2, 2013
10:30 – noon at church.



The topic will be medical recommendations and how we approach getting care.

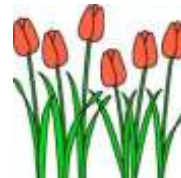
Spiral Scouts – Every SUNDAY from 1 to 3 pm.



This program for children and youth includes interpersonal skills, traditional woodland lore, camping, and outdoor living skills. Please use this email (amy9637@gmail.com) and our facebook [facebook.com/riverdragonspiralscouts](https://www.facebook.com/riverdragonspiralscouts), as

it will give updated information about what we are, upcoming events and what is going on in our meetings.

Amy Eichen



The Anna Ds – 1st Thursday of each month.

The Anna Ds will meet at 11:30 am on March 7 at Methodist Village. The address is 5201 Asbury in Godfrey. Pay \$7.25 for lunch at the front desk and then go downstairs for the lunch and meeting. **MaryLu McManus** is hosting this meeting. RSVP to her if you are planning to attend. Her email is mlmcmamus@charter.net. Please let her know by March 4.

On Thursday, March 28 we will be hosting the Women's Alliance from the First Unitarian Church in St. Louis. We will firm up plans for that luncheon at our March 7 meeting. Details will be sent out later this month. All women in the church are invited to attend Anna Ds luncheons.



The **ROMEOS – Retired Old Men Eating Out** – will meet on Thursday, March 14 at 11:30 am at the Best

Buffet at 615 Wesley, Drive in Wood River IL. Contact **Dick Blanton** dickb65@sbcglobal.net for further details. All men in our church are invited!



**Worship Associates
TUESDAY, March 5
7:00 to 8:30 pm**

The discussion topic for this month's meeting is the role of the "message" in the worship service. This was to be the topic for last month's cancelled meeting

For more information contact **Khleber Van Zandt**
kvanzandt@uuma.org.

**Your ATTENTION is Needed
to
Maintain the Church Building**



If you notice something in the church building that needs attention or repair, please contact our Building Co-Chair **Lee Suarez** at Lenoresuarez12@yahoo.com



**Notes from Board Trustee &
Newsletter Liaison -
Sandy Shaner**

Wow, have you seen the new coffee prep area and kitchen! Thanks to the hard work of many in managing this project, we were able to get a sneak peek in mid-February. The new stove, wall ovens, refrigerators, counters, and new cabinets that completely match the re-used ones ... what a great sight after weeks of construction desolation. Since then the project leaders went through the short list of loose ends for the contractor to finish and recruited more volunteers to participate in an all-round cleaning and return of the contents of many stored boxes.

Still to come is a steam cleaning of the Wuerker Room carpet and soon we'll be ready for the Grand Reopening of the Kitchen scheduled for Sunday, March 24 in conjunction with the 4th Sunday Pot Luck. Mark your calendars and come prepared to revel in the new facilities.

Another date for your calendars is Friday, March 8 when Spiral Blanton is creating a coffee house at church from 6:30-8:30. She's planning poetry, music, snacks and fun, fun, fun. Check Facebook for details as we get closer to the date.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Send Newsletter items by the 15th of each month to the newsletter editor,
Mary Johnson – mejohanson@mindspring.com
and also to **Becky Green** in the church office
church@firstuualton.org
Church phone: 618-462-2462
Mail: PO Box 494, Alton IL 62002



Food Drive

More than 11% of the people living in Madison County are impoverished. That's over 30,000 people. The Crisis Food Center in Alton provides families and individuals in need with a week's supply of food on an ongoing basis.

Please bring your donations of canned or long-shelf-life food (veggies, fruit, meat, cake mixes, pasta, etc.) to church and put the items in the marked container in the RE entrance foyer.

**News from the
Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office**

April 4th-6th, New York City. You are invited to join our intergenerational, interfaith dialogue on global Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Trans-Queer issues. We encourage youth, young adults, adults, and seniors to all participate in discussing crucial issues affecting the LGBTQ community throughout the globe. The 2013 seminar *Sex, Love and Violence: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in a Globalized World*, will be held in New York City, April 4th-6th (youth arrive in the evening April 3rd).

You can find more information on
www.uua.org/unspringseminar.

**Women's Alliance Scholarship Competition
For the academic year 2013-14
First Unitarian Church of St. Louis**

Women over 25 who are registered students financially responsible for continuing their education, and who are members of a greater St. Louis area UU church, are eligible to apply for a \$2,000 scholarship based on scholarship, character and need. Deadline 4/19/2013. For further information email office@firstuustlouis.org

**Our Newest Members
Joined on February 3**



Debbie* and Jeff Lovell
(Kira)
St. Louis, MO 63121
debbyL@gmail.com

Melody Hardman*
Wood River, IL 62095
nberg1240@yahoo.com

Char McAllister* and Lee Suarez*
Jerseyville, IL 62052
Lee lenoresuarez12@yahoo.com
Char charlenemcallister613@hotmail.com

Chris* and Lisa* Strangeman
(Jonathan, Andrew)
Jerseyville, IL 62052
Chris ccstrangeman@hotmail.com
Lisa lisa@strangemans.com

*Getting to Know You –
Biographies of a few of our New Members*

Chris and Lisa Strangeman

Chris was born and raised in Charleston, Illinois. Lisa was born and raised in Fort Valley, Georgia. Lisa earned her education at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, while Chris earned his degrees from MacMurray College in Jacksonville, Illinois, Eastern Illinois University, and Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Having taught at several different community colleges around Illinois, upon earning his doctorate, Chris accepted a full-time job at Middle Georgia College in Cochran, Georgia. More importantly, while in Georgia, he met Lisa and they married in Charleston, South Carolina in the summer of 2008. While in Georgia, Chris and Lisa had their two boys, Jonathan, who is three and a half (born in 2009), and Andrew, who is one and a half (born in 2011). They lived in Macon, Georgia for five years prior to moving to Jerseyville, Illinois in fall 2012. Chris and Lisa feel fortunate that they live much closer to Chris' parents so that Andrew and Jonathan can see their grandparents regularly. Currently, Chris teaches history at MacMurray College, his alma mater, and Lisa works as an auto damage adjuster for GEICO in the St. Louis metro area. They also feel fortunate to have found such an inclusive church in Alton.

Jaimie Hileman

Jaimie is originally from Anna, Illinois, about twenty miles south of Carbondale. She attended SIU at Carbondale majoring in journalism, advertising specialty, but since 1991, Jaimie has been involved in retailing, wholesaling and importing wine and spirits.

March 26 will mark the 20th anniversary of Jaimie's first date with her spouse, Sarah Lazarz, who is our current board secretary. They met in the bar of "Carbondale's famous" Tres Hombres Restaurant, which Jaimie describes as more of a hangout for faculty and grad students. Although it was Sarah who joined our church first, Jaimie has found a home here, too. She finds the one-on-one discussions with our members exciting and challenging. She says that they give her something to think about the other six days of the week.

Jaimie's hobbies include traveling, cooking and camping. She and Sarah enjoy being outdoors and try to take at least one long hike every month.



**PotLuck Lunch and
Dedication of New
Kitchen and Coffee
Center**

It's finally done!! Join us as we dedicate our "new" kitchen on Sunday, March 24. It's been several months since we've been able to have a potluck lunch together, so come enjoy the day at church and celebrate the completion of another capital campaign project!

Lay Caring Ministry

Below is the current list of members of the **Caring Ministries Committee**. You may always contact one of them in time of illness, loss, crisis, or other need. Keep this list of contact people available in case you or your family is in need of pastoral support.

Amy Andrews ~ ajrn07@gmail.com

Brian Bennett ~ bben990703@hotmail.com

Chrissie Blount ~ cchapman@lc.edu

Marcia Custer ~ mcuster@siue.edu

Melody Hardman ~ nberg1240@yahoo.com

Sharon Johnson ~ sharonjohnsonmsw@gmail.com

Kathleen McKeever ~ mckeeverjim@sbcglobal.net

Catherine Nofles ~ cnofles@gmail.com

Sabrina Trupia ~ strupia@gmail.com (Chair)

Khleber Van Zandt ~ kvanzandt@uuma.org
314-223-0551(MO)
618-520-0567 (IL)

The Caring Ministries Committee is ready to welcome several more members! If you are interested in engaging in conversations with other church friends and getting to know them on a deeper level, please consider joining our group! Please contact Sabrina Trupia at strupia@gmail.com.



March Birthdays

Most people enjoy getting a card, email, or phone call on their birthday. Below is the list we have of church members and friends celebrating birthdays this month. If you do not think the church office has your birthday on file, please contact Becky Green at church@firstuualton.org and give her that information.

03/02	Ty'ria Payne (2003)
03/03	Jerry Johnson
03/04	Lauren Johnson (2002)
03/04	Elizabeth Sellitto
03/05	Eowyn Wolff (2004)
03/06	Kathryn Chapman
03/08	Margaret Berkley (1997)
03/09	Michelle Hudson
03/13	Louis Bailey
03/15	Sarah Drury-Dothager
03/16	Robyn Berkley
03/18	William Lewis
03/18	Amanda Wright
03/23	Kira Lovell (1998)
03/24	Audrey White (2007)
03/25	Gerry Gilman
03/27	Steve Blount

Unitarian Universalist Meetings

Central Midwest District (CMWD) Assembly

April 26-28

Waukesha, WI (near Milwaukee)

<http://www.cmwd-uua.org>

General Assembly (GA)

The annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

GA will be in Louisville Kentucky June 19 – 23. This will be a great opportunity for many of us to attend, as Louisville is an easy 4-hour drive from St. Louis. Go to the website below for additional information. **Registration, housing, volunteer and scholarship applications will be available March 1.**

<http://www.uua.org/ga/>



March RE Program News & Notes

Winter Intercession Play—There Be Dragons!

Many thanks to all who helped with costumes, sets, wrangling, music, and sound: Neil Hershey, Ken Hoeft, Trish Botsko, Kelly Crone-Willis, Tom Kinder, Tony Grippi, Mike Bechtol, Ethel Potts, Eric Johnson, Erin Vigneau-Dimick, and Holly Mead. I hope all enjoyed!

Youth Conferences! Mark Your Calendars!

- **Middle School Mini-Con, March 8-9** hosted by the Unitarian Church of Columbia, MO (2-hr drive)— grades 6-8; Chaperones and drivers: Mark and Cathy Tade; returning to Alton around 5 p.m. Saturday
- **2013 Spring Senior High District CON, April 19-20** (*district* means a *big* five-state conference) hosted by First Unitarian Church, St. Louis, 5007 Waterman Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri (45 minute drive); grades 9-12; chaperones: Debby Lovell and Cathy Tade

Mark Your Calendars and Save the Date!

March 23rd RE Parents Sponsor Our Fourth Saturday Luncheon

An important part of our RE program is social service. From time-to-time we set aside our regular classroom learning to participate in social and community action activities. Our March Social Service Sunday, March 17th, will include activities that support the following 4th Saturday Luncheon served at the church to the hungry Alton community. *RE parents are sponsoring the March 23rd luncheon.* It's important for children to see their parents live out their Unitarian Universalist values in service to the underserved and disenfranchised. Children are invited to attend on the 23rd with their parents and help out in age-appropriate ways. More information will become available through worship service announcements, the weekly Church bulletin e-mail, and our Facebook group page, *UU Friends*. Save the date! Let's throw a party!

Volunteer Opportunities in the RE Program—A Teaching Ministry

Since September, we have lost several teachers this year from both our regular teaching rotation and our substitute team. Particularly pressing is replacing

Mike Bechtol on our 7th-8th grade team. Mike will be moving to Los Angeles in March. Our program can benefit from adding five teachers or so this spring to get back to strength.

- 7-8th Grade Team—1 teacher; teaching four-five Sundays between now and May 26
- 1st-2nd Grade Team—1 teacher; teaching four-five Sundays between now and May 26
- Spirit Play Team—1 to 2 teachers; we are already one short and we may be losing Daisy this spring
- Substitute Team—2-3 teachers; teaching as necessary

Any congregant may volunteer; however, parents with enrolled children are particularly encouraged to volunteer to teach in the Religious Education Program during their sojourn at First Unitarian. Teachers generally teach in teams of four. Teachers receive orientation, training, quality curricula, and continuous support by RE staff and RE Committee members. First Unitarian must conduct a child-safety background check on all RE teachers per our Child and Youth Protection Program.

The Religious Education Steering Committee

The purpose of the RE Program is to prepare our children to live spiritually, responsibly, compassionately and intentionally in a complex world. Our efforts are driven by the vision of "growing the soul" and helping students become excited about and come to cherish spiritual life while we guide and support children and families on their journey as lifelong Unitarian Universalists.

The RE Committee is a group of lay leaders who work cooperatively with our Director of Religious Education to fulfill First Unitarian's vision for rich, meaningful religious programming for children and youth. The Committee meets monthly during the church year to discuss progress, programming, needs, and new initiatives. One need not have children in the RE program to be a steering committee member. We need 2-3 volunteers by this summer; be an important Voice in this Special Place.

Steven Mead, DRE
dre@firstuualton.org